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# Church–State Relations in the 1899 Malolos Constitution: Filipinization and Visions of National Community

Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.\*

The most contentious issue in the Revolutionary Congress that crafted the 1899 Malolos Constitution pertained to the separation of church and state, which won by a mere one vote. Until now this episode in Philippine history has not received a satisfactory explanation, which this article seeks to offer. The debate in Malolos, as argued here, was profoundly divisive because the two sides were driven by differing visions of national community. A crucial point was the Filipinization of the Catholic Church, which the proponents of church–state unity championed and which their opponents sidestepped. Even as the debate raged, however, Aguinaldo’s revolutionary government acted on the church–state issue out of political expediency. In the end, the issue that Filipino elites could not resolve was settled by US colonialism, which imposed church–state separation without Filipinization.

**Keywords:** separation of church and state, Catholic Church, Filipino nationalism, Spanish friars, Masonry, Mabini, Aglipay

The Revolutionary Congress that convened on September 15, 1898—which Apolinario Mabini, who became Aguinaldo’s chief adviser, originally conceived to be merely an advisory body—went on to write a constitution for the fledgling Republic of the Philippines whose independence was declared on June 12, 1898 (Agoncillo 1960, 294–295). In the Congress’s debate over the new nation’s charter, the most divisive, controversial, and “energetically debated” (Majul 1967, 153) issue pertained to the relations between church and state. Interestingly this assembly was meeting within the premises of the Barasoain Church in Malolos, Bulacan, which was momentarily desacralized and converted to a state legislative arena adorned with numerous Philippine flags.

In the 1960s Teodoro Agoncillo (1960) and Cesar Majul (1967) wrote about this aspect of the Malolos Congress as part of their larger projects on the Philippine revolution. Since then scholarship on this topic has stalled, with hardly any new work published in subsequent decades. This article builds on these early writings. However, as shown

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here, the analyses by Agoncillo and Majul of the question of church–state relations were inadequate, not necessarily in terms of historical sources—with Felipe G. Calderón’s *Mis Memorias Sobre la Revolución Filipina* (My Memoirs of the Philippine Revolution, 1907) serving as the main source,<sup>1)</sup>—but in the interpretive frame with which they explained the divisiveness of this issue. Agoncillo (1960), for instance, reduced the Malolos Congress to, in his words, “triumphant conservatism,” offering no satisfactory explanation for the victory of church–state separation by one vote, a feat that should not be undervalued in a meeting of supposed conservatives. Majul (1967) bequeathed an exhaustive and very informative narrative, but interpretatively his work was inconclusive, unable to rise above the deep divide in Malolos. Because of this historiographic gap, the present discussion links the narrative to an analysis of the imagined community that each side in the debate propounded. An important aspect of this analytical frame is the desired Filipinization of the Catholic Church, which resulted in a number of contradictions, such as in the way Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo’s revolutionary government acted on the issue of church–state relations. In other words, the significance of church–state relations as debated in Malolos and the events that transpired at that time and in its immediate aftermath had not been analyzed in Philippine historiography. With the benefit of writing in an age of a more mature Philippine nationalism but with church–state relations remaining a sensitive social issue, I attempt in this article to examine this significant episode in Philippine history.

To set the debate in Malolos in context, it is worth recalling that at this time in Europe there was no separation of church and state, even after most of Northern Europe had turned over to different variants of Protestantism following the Reformation. In the case of France, despite the ravages suffered by the Catholic Church in the late eighteenth century, a fleeting declaration of church–state separation in 1795, and Napoleon’s Concordat with the Vatican that brought the church under the authority of the state, it would not be until 1905 that France would become the first country in Europe to formally adopt and sustain the principle of church–state separation through the concept of *laïcité* (laicism or secularity). As in the case of nationalism that according to Benedict Anderson (1991) was essayed by creole pioneers, the principle of church–state separation was formally invented in the former colonies, particularly in the United States where the Bill of Rights, specifically the 1791 First Amendment to the US Constitution, established complete religious freedom. The exact metaphor of “the wall of separation between church and state” in reference to the First Amendment was derived, as is well known, from a letter

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1) Like Agoncillo (1960), Majul (1967), Zafra (1999), and others, I rely heavily on Felipe G. Calderón’s (1907) memoirs, which contains an appendix that offers a fair and useful account of the debates in Malolos.

of Thomas Jefferson written in 1802. In Mexico the issuance in 1859 of the *Ley Lerdo* was seen as establishing separation of the hostile kind, for its purpose was to compel the Catholic Church as well as municipal and state governments to sell landed properties, with these entities permitted to retain ownership only of buildings that were directly used for their operations. In this light, the debate in Malolos in 1898—with the Philippines in the throes of being a postcolony—was relatively early when seen from the perspective of Europe and even global history.<sup>2)</sup>

Theoretically the separation of church and state is often seen as a structural concomitant of the spread of rationalization, the rise of religious pluralism, and the growing dominance of the state in social life. Although the separation of church and state has often been seen as part of a simple linear development, this view is ahistorical. The multiplicity of different arrangements in the relations between church and state around the world—from a situation in which the state is subject to religious authority (theocracy) to a state with an official religion (protected, supported, and/or controlled in variable ways), to friendly, indifferent, or hostile separation—suggests that these relations change and evolve in ways specific to the historical dynamics of particular social formations. In the Philippines the late nineteenth century provided a complex set of conditions that made a debate on this issue possible, specifically in the context of the Malolos Congress. However, as shown here, the separation of church and state eventually occurred not as the outcome of an autochthonous process of structural social change but as an imposition by an imperial power.

The sections that follow this introduction provide an overview of the Malolos Congress and the principal contenders. Subsequent sections contextualize the debate in Malolos through a discussion of the Catholic Church in the Philippines in the nineteenth century, which was beset by an internal controversy over the control of parishes that eventually spilled over and stimulated Filipino nationalism in the last two decades of that century. The critique of Spanish friars was a preponderant concern of the nationalist movement. Yet, the intelligentsia did not directly address the nation's relationship with the Catholic Church itself and neither did they examine the prevailing unity of church and state under the Spanish dictum of the *Patronato Real* (Royal Patronage). Malolos provided the venue for this singular debate in Philippine history. The arguments advanced by both sides, both with their respective limitations, are presented in later sections. The article concludes with an analysis of what the two sides represented and their irreconcilable difference, which, as the epilogue discusses, was settled by the US imposition of its

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2) Catholicism was disestablished as recently as 2009 in Bolivia, 1987 in Haiti, and 1985 in Italy; it remains the official or state religion in Argentina, Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Malta, and Monaco.

colonial policy on church–state separation, a process that brought to the fore some legacies of the contending ideas in Malolos.

## Malolos: An Overview

In his *Memorias* Calderón (1907, 234–236) recounted that the committee tasked to prepare a draft constitution received two versions, one prepared by Mabini (said to have been patterned after the Spanish constitution) and another by Pedro Paterno (also averred to have been copied from the Spanish constitution, and actually prepared by Ricardo Regidor). It should be noted that the Spanish constitution of 1869—the first “liberal” constitution since 1812 and a product of the Glorious Revolution that deposed Isabella II—upheld the principle of a national religion, but it also permitted the practice of other religions, especially among foreigners.<sup>3)</sup> However, unlike the Spanish charter, Mabini’s constitutional program declared religious freedom and disavowed any state religion.<sup>4)</sup>

Calderón believed that most delegates personally liked Paterno but disliked Mabini,

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- 3) Calderón (1907, 235) referred to the Spanish Constitution of 1868; it should be 1869. Article 21, Title 1, of the 1869 Spanish Constitution stated that the practice of Catholicism and its ministers would be “maintained” by “the nation,” although the practice of other religions, especially by foreigners, was also guaranteed:

The Nation is obliged to maintain the worship and the ministers of the Catholic religion. The public or private practice of any other religion is guaranteed to all foreign residents in Spain without restrictions other than the universal rules of morality and law. If some Spaniards profess a religion other than the Catholic religion, everything contained in the preceding paragraph [sentence] is applicable to them.

The loose phrasing of the 1869 Constitution was reversed in the charter of 1876, which restored the Spanish monarchy under Alfonso XII and created a parliament that was alternately under the Liberal and Conservative parties. Article 11, Title 1, of the 1876 Constitution declared unequivocally that Roman Catholicism was the state religion:

The Roman Catholic Apostolic religion is the religion of the State. The Nation is obliged to maintain this worship and its ministers. However, none in Spanish territory will be molested for their religious opinions or the practice of their respective religions, as long as they accord due respect to Christian morality. Nevertheless, ceremonies or public demonstrations other than those of the State religion will not be permitted.

- 4) Under Title 1, Article 12 of Mabini’s draft charter stated (Mabini 2011, 131–132):

The Republic as a collective entity does not profess any religion, leaving this matter to the conscience of the individual who will be free to select the religion that he believes is most noble and logical.

Thus no one may be persecuted for his religious beliefs or for the practice of his faith within the Philippine territory, unless this violates universal morality.

Nevertheless, public manifestations of a religious nature may not be carried out without a license from the local authority.

so he made it appear that what he would present to the Congress was Paterno's draft with some revisions. But, hurriedly, he prepared an entirely different document, which he claimed to have patterned after South American constitutions, particularly that of Costa Rica.<sup>5)</sup>

On October 8 Calderón's draft was submitted to the committee and approved with some modifications, although it was opposed by a faction that Calderón referred to as "Mabini's partisans" (*ibid.*, 236). Subsequently, on October 21, copies of the draft were distributed to the delegates. Debates and voting on the articles commenced in late October and lasted until November.

Title 3 on religion was among the early provisions of Calderón's draft constitution that would have been tackled on October 28, but given its contentiousness and the protracted debate it was expected to consume the delegates agreed to defer the discussion till the last (*ibid.*, Appendix CR29). There could have been other options in dealing with the fraught relationship between church and state, as native elites held various views that ranged from absolute adherence to total repudiation of the Catholic Church. Many who were antifriar remained loyal to the church. "Besides the doctrinaire anticlericals, there were also those in the government or the congress who wanted clerical cooperation, but who cared, or understood, little about problems of doctrine or ecclesiastical jurisdiction and were determined to bring the Church under state control" (Schumacher 1981, 76). In Malolos, however, the debate was polarized into Calderón's proposal on the union of church and state and the opposing amendment introduced by Tomás del Rosario, Felix Ferrer, M. del Rosario, Arcadio del Rosario, and Cecilio Hilario. This amendment reduced the three articles in Title 3 to one article that declared, "The State recognizes the freedom and equality of all religions, as well as the separation of the Church and the State" (*El Estado reconoce la libertad e igualdad de todos los cultos, así como la separación de la iglesia y el Estado*) (Calderón 1907, Appendix CR28).

The Congress returned to the issue of church-state relations on November 22 (*ibid.*, Appendix CR70). Two days later Calderón continued his argumentation, but a number of "interruptions" by Tomás del Rosario were recorded. When the Congress met again on November 29 Calderón resumed his peroration; Joaquin Gonzales would have spoken also in favor of church-state unity but relinquished his turn in order that the delegates could vote on the issue (*ibid.*, Appendix CR91-92). This faction was probably confident of having the numbers. It was agreed that votes would be cast by secret ballot. At the precise moment when the casting of ballots was to take place, a group of delegates against the principle of state religion headed by Antonio Luna entered the session hall (Agoncillo

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5) See note 12 for the provision on religion in the constitution of Costa Rica.

1960, 305; Calderón 1907, 243). When the votes were counted, the result was a tie, each side garnering 25 votes (Calderón 1907, Appendix CR92). Among proponents of church–state unity, there was dissatisfaction that Pedro Paterno, the presiding officer, did not cast his vote. A small debate on the assembly’s internal rules ensued, which was settled by holding a second round of voting. This time Pablo Tecson, one of the assembly’s secretaries who had abstained in the first round, voted, effectively breaking the tie and enabling the amendment on church–state separation to triumph in Malolos by one vote (*ibid.*).<sup>6)</sup>

The completed draft was submitted to Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo, who temporized as he weighed his political options. On January 25, 1899 the Constitución Política de 1899, popularly known as the Malolos Constitution, was finally proclaimed, but modified by a set of transitory provisions. However, in less than a fortnight, on February 4, 1899, fighting erupted between US and Filipino troops. The Philippine Republic officially declared war on the United States on June 2, 1899, but US might cut short the republic’s existence.<sup>7)</sup>

## The Principal Contenders

In the 1960s scholars dismissed Calderón’s advocacy of church–state unity as owing to his irretrievable conservatism. Majul (1967, 156) described Calderón (as well as another proponent, Manuel Gómez) as “typical Filipino conservatives, weaned and educated by the Mother Church.” With pretensions to psychoanalytic depth, Agoncillo (1960, 298) was even more denigrating: “Whether Calderon was aware of it or not, the fact that he was a grandson of a Spanish friar probably militated against his impulse to provide for religious equality. Here the conservative mind, deeply rooted in the marriage of Church and State, came to the surface and protruded like a buoy swaying in all directions but unable to free itself from its anchorage.”

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6) The number of delegates in the Malolos Congress, all members of the native elite, changed over time. By the end of 1898 there were 94 representatives; 35 had been elected and 59 appointed (Majul 1960, 167). Note that only 51 votes were cast on November 29, 1898 to decide the question of church–state relations—roughly 54 percent of the 94 delegates by the end of 1898. Reportedly some provinces could not elect delegates while others could not send the elected ones to Malolos because of the unsettled conditions. However, by July 7, 1899, when the Philippine–American war was already raging, there were 193 delegates; of these, 42 were elected while 151 were appointed (Agoncillo 1960, 276–277).

7) The war officially ended on July 4, 1902. Earlier, Spain’s loss and its cession of the Philippines to the US was formalized in the Treaty of Paris that was signed on December 10, 1898, coming into effect on April 11, 1899.



Calderón (1907, 65) admitted that he had “intimate relations” with the Jesuits, who taught him at the Ateneo Municipal (he obtained his law degree from the University of Santo Tomas). In Malolos he “collaborated closely” with Fr. Mariano Sevilla, who had been exiled in 1872 and held the highest educational attainment among the native priests (Schumacher 1981, 81). However, Calderón was a more complex figure than the flat character sketched by Agoncillo and Majul. Like other *ilustrados* (literally, enlightened) and many other native elites, Calderón was staunchly antifriar. In last minute talks with the Spanish general and the Manila archbishop, as US forces were poised to move to the Philippines with the return of Aguinaldo from Hong Kong in May 1898, Calderón (1907, 68) recalled that “all conciliation with Spain was already impossible.” His narrative stated that he demanded the immediate withdrawal of Spanish governors from the provinces; the immediate withdrawal of all friar parish priests and the turning over of parishes to secular (native) priests; and the promise to break up the monastic estates for sale to the tenants (*ibid.*, 71–72). Evidently Calderón’s stance concerning the friars was uncompromising. Perhaps for this reason he revered Rizal’s novels. In the law school, the Escuela de Derecho, that he founded in 1899 (now the Manila Law College), as Teodoro Kalaw (1965, 33) recalled, Calderón “held special Sunday classes on the works of Rizal, especially on the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *Filibusterismo*, which he called his Bible.”

Across the divide was the fiercest advocate of separation, Tomás del Rosario. He was in Madrid in 1888 when Rizal and Del Pilar had serious disagreements; in the same year he returned to the Philippines and received successive appointments as Justice of the Peace, Prosecuting Attorney, and Judge of the Court of First Instance in Manila. In 1896 he was deported to Ceuta, Spain’s enclave on the northwest coast of Africa, where he was detained for 11 months. After his release in 1897 he returned to the Philippines (Bolasco 1994, 54–55) and became a major force in Malolos.

In addition to being led by lawyers, both sides of the debate shared a common antipathy toward the Spanish friars—a hallmark of the *ilustrados* of this period who, as the core of the intelligentsia, assumed a critical stance toward the Spanish colonial establishment. However, many of the separationists could be distinguished from the unionists by their adherence to Masonry. How did Masonry affect the deliberations in Malolos?

That Tomás del Rosario was affiliated with Masonry has been remarked upon a number of times, as if it were somehow an explanatory factor for the deep division in Malolos.<sup>8)</sup> The same has been noted of Arcadio del Rosario, who also vigorously defended the separationist principle (Majul 1967, 154 n. 3; Bolasco 1994, 55; Agoncillo 1960, 298).

8) On Masonry in Philippine history, see Schumacher (1997, 171–178; 1991, 156–177). On the economic and cultural implications of Masonry, see Aguilar (1998). Cf. the website of the Philippine Center for Masonic Studies at <http://www.philippinemasonry.org>, accessed May 26, 2014.



As Majul (1967, 175) put it, with a good dose of speculation, “some of the proponents of the principle of separation were Masons who were closely aware of or in contact with the liberal movement in Spain. As such, they had definite ideas on the problem or possibly even some commitments.”

What is remarkable is that, although Masonry had inspired the alternative vision of the imagined community propounded by Tomás del Rosario and others, Calderón (1907, 112, 242) deftly avoided labeling any of his fellow delegates as Masons. He did refer to a group that he called “Mabini’s partisans” and, in turn, pointed to Mabini as fomenting “the sectarian Masonic spirit.”

It is worth recalling that at this moment in Malolos José Rizal had been executed (December 1896); Graciano Lopez Jaena (January 1896) and Marcelo del Pilar (July 1896) had died overseas in miserable poverty; Andres Bonifacio had been executed by fellow revolutionaries (May 1897); after Bonifacio’s execution, Emilio Jacinto had refused to join forces with Aguinaldo; and Isabelo de los Reyes had been temporarily muted (deported to Spain, jailed in Montjuich in Barcelona, released in December 1897, and given a sinecure as counselor in the Ministro de Ultramar [Ministry of Colonies] from 1898 to 1901). Mabini was the one nonclerical intellectual who drew the line around which deep divisions were carved. But, as we shall see, Mabini himself was torn and in fact would prove himself overwhelmed by the war with the United States.

Notwithstanding his opinion of Mabini, Calderón (*ibid.*, 242)—like other ilustrados—regarded Masonry as it had developed in the Philippines as “more than an anti-Catholic sect, [but] a society geared to counteract the power of the friars, not so much as ministers of a religion, but as agents of a political order, or, rather, as a manifestation of the Spanish political colonizing power.” In this view friars were not even deemed ministers of religion but political agents of the colonial state.

Significantly Calderón, who faced the opponents of his proposal on state religion, was tactful in not considering Masonry as providing explanatory force to the deep division over the question of church–state relations. In writing his memoirs he had the benefit of hindsight in knowing that Aguinaldo and Mabini, albeit Masons, deferred the implementation of the separationist principle that won in the Malolos Congress and, as will be seen below, their actions established a *de facto* state religion during the tumultuous interregnum. Nevertheless, Calderón considered Masons as mistakenly assuming that friar abuses were inherent defects of the Catholic Church (*ibid.*). Indeed one of the issues in Malolos was disentangling Catholicism from the Spanish friars.

## Catholicism and the Nationalist Movement

Although Calderón's antifriar sentiment was consistent with much of the nationalist movement in the late nineteenth century, his position on church–state unity differed from those who advocated the opposite scenario in that it articulated a specific vision of the national community. This vision was built on the fact that the Filipino nationalist movement owed its origins to the struggle between Spanish friars and the secular priests (creoles and natives) over the control of parishes. This struggle, known as the secularization controversy, commenced in the 1820s when the policy that allowed native secular priests to become parish priests was reversed owing to their lack of preparedness for their positions and because of the fear stoked by native priests' participation in the wars of independence in the Americas. In Manila, starting in 1849, Fr. Pedro Peláez took up the cudgels for the secular clergy as a matter of right based on canon law. After Peláez's death in the earthquake of 1863, Fr. José Burgos pursued the issue but turned it into a racial one, arguing that Spanish friars treated native secular priests as inferior and undeserving to be elevated as parish priests (Schumacher 1999; 2006; Blanco 2010). Burgos, along with two other priests, Mariano Gómez and Jacinto Zamora, were martyred in the wake of the failed revolution known as the Cavite Munity of 1872 (Schumacher 2011).

Situating himself in this revered tradition, Calderón's (1907, 243, Appendix CR82–83) defense of church–state unity paid homage to Peláez, Burgos, Zamora, Gómez, and other priests who were incarcerated, deported, and executed for the sake of the *patria*, they being the “principal authors of the reform movement.” The “Filipino clergy” shed their blood and planted the seed of the movement that culminated in the revolution. Calderón's advocacy was rooted in this history; for him recognizing Catholicism as the state religion would signal that the revolution accorded the pioneers of the nationalist movement due respect. Based on this particular reading of Philippine history and his view of the European situation, Calderón regarded religious freedom as historically absurd and politically inappropriate for the Philippines: “Religious freedom is an impossibility, philosophically considered, an historical absurdity, and a political contradiction, especially in the Philippines” (*ibid.*, Appendix CR84).

Looking back at this debate in Malolos, Calderón (*ibid.*, 242) wrote, “the power of the native priests is very well known, and to proclaim the separation of church and state at those moments was tantamount to putting aside this very valuable element of our people.” Certainly the role of the native clergy in the rise of Filipino nationalism could not be denied. In fact Calderón's position was consistent with, or at least not overtly contrary to, the Propaganda Movement, which did not campaign against the Catholic Church *per se* but only against the Spanish friars.

The immediate antecedent of the 1896 revolution, the Propaganda Movement articulated the issues confronted by Spain's colonized subjects. The ilustrados at the forefront of the movement, particularly Rizal, Del Pilar, and Lopez Jaena, were staunchly antifriar. In his political tracts, Del Pilar described friar hegemony and the friars' stranglehold on native society as *La Soberania Monacal* (The Monastic Sovereignty) and *La Frailocracia* (The Friarocracy). However, the Propagandists, realizing that natives had appropriated Catholicism as their personal religion, did not publicly denigrate the Catholic Church. Thus they trained their criticisms on the friars. For a good part of the history of the Propaganda Movement since its inception in Spain in the early 1880s, its campaign was for assimilation, particularly for representation in the Cortes. There was an element in assimilation that suggested Hispanization that in turn rested upon a Catholic identity.

Although the lines were sometimes blurred, the Propagandists emphasized that they were against the rule of the friars but not against the Catholic Church itself. However, in one private letter dated March 25, 1889 Del Pilar stated, "I can discern clearly now that we need the weakening of the Pope" (Maliuanag at naaninaw ko ñgayon kailaňgan nga natin ang hina nang Papa), suggesting further that what "the Pope" (i.e., Catholicism) had sown in the Philippines was not deeply rooted and therefore the faith of the people could be easily discredited (Del Pilar 1955, 72–73). Nonetheless, in Del Pilar's letters to Blumentritt he took the stand that the struggle against the friars was for the benefit of Spain and the Catholic Church. For his part, Graciano Lopez Jaena ([1889] 1996, 30, 31) declared in his famous speech delivered at the Ateneo Barcelonés on February 25, 1889 that Filipinos were at war with the friars, but it was not a fight for or against religion (No es una lucha por la religión ni contra la religión). When Rizal crossed the boundary lines, he allowed himself to be corrected in print by Blumentritt, a good Catholic but also morally a liberal, whose prologue to Rizal's annotated edition of Antonio Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* stated that Rizal confused his attacks on the abuses of the friars with that of the whole of Catholicism.<sup>9</sup> As John Schumacher (1997, 140–142) has pointed out, Ferdinand Blumentritt's profession of Catholicism buttressed the ilustrados' contention that the periodical *La Solidaridad*, to which he was an avid contributor, was not against Catholicism as such but against friar abuses. Evidently Calderón's (1907, 242) belief that it was an error to think that the abuses of the friars were "defects" of the Catholic Church was consistent with the public stance of the Propaganda Movement.

It is noteworthy that the ilustrados did not promote atheism; rather, they continued

9) Blumentritt (1962, xiii) stated in his prologue: "The second point with which I don't agree is some unbosoming against Catholicism. I believe that the origin of numerous occurrences regrettable to religion, to Spain, and to the good name of the European race should be sought in the harsh behavior and abuses of many priests."

to profess faith, if not in God, then at least in Divine Providence. Del Pilar (1955, 50) wrote on March 7, 1889 that “we should not forget that we are no more than mere instruments to be used in the inscrutable designs of the God of peace, who in his eternal Love will not permit the misfortunes of millions of his creatures to go on forever. Let us praise heaven and have faith, a strong and resolute faith in the future.” As Rizal himself wrote on April 2, 1889, “Perhaps you would find it strange that the Calambano, who has mocked many beliefs and superstitions, should be a firm believer in Providence”; in fact, Rizal averred that he had “more faith in God than all the friars put together” (*ibid.*, 80). Theirs, they claimed, was the genuine faith in contrast to the spurious religiosity of the Spanish friars.<sup>10)</sup>

Given the nationalist movement’s official stance of being antifriar but not anti-Catholic Church, there was no room to question the Patronato Real, by which the Vatican allowed the Spanish crown to sponsor and financially support Catholic missionary work in Spain’s colonies and, in exchange, have the deciding voice in the selection of ecclesiastical personnel and the disposition of the local church’s revenues.<sup>11)</sup> The Patronato Real underpinned the unity of church and state in the Spanish colonial Philippines.

Only somewhat late in the Propaganda Movement was there a mild questioning of this union when in September 1892 Del Pilar criticized Gov.-Gen. Eulogio Despujol’s decree ordering Rizal’s deportation to Mindanao. Rizal was banished for “wresting away the treasure of the Catholic faith from the hearts of Filipinos,” to which Del Pilar ([1892] 1996, 434) replied, “One should respect the Catholic faith in its proper time . . . but it is unjust, illegal, and arbitrary to invoke the argument of national integrity for every injury to the religious elements” (*Respétese en buen hora la fe católica . . . pero es injusto, ilegal y arbitrario sacar el cristo de la integridad nacional por cualquier molestia de los elementos religiosos*). National integrity was to be distinguished from religion. Del Pilar (*ibid.*) also pointed to the religious diversity in the Philippines and that religion was not the social glue, not the basis of social cohesion, within the colony and in the colony’s relationship with Spain. Even then, Del Pilar, in asking how Rizal’s supposed offense

10) Millenarian movements advanced a similar claim to authenticity of religion in contrast to what they saw as the friars’ false religion. After Spain’s downfall Papa Isio’s movement on Negros Island saw itself as the defender of “the holy faith” against “Protestant” Americans; Isio’s dream was to establish a theocratic government (Aguilar 1998, 180–183). For this millenarian movement, church–state unity was a given. This claim to authenticity could well be not far from the sentiment of Filipino priests who supported the revolution against Spain, calling it a “holy war” against the Spaniards (cf. Schumacher 1976, 409; 1981, 53).

11) At best the Propaganda Movement sought to reform the system, such as supporting the proposal of the Ministro de Ultramar to fix the stipend of parish priests in lieu of the variable 12.5 percent of the income taxes (*cedulas personales*) collected in the parish; implemented in 1890, the measure caused much consternation, according to Del Pilar (1955, 193, 211).

became one against the state religion, hesitated to question explicitly the existence of or need for such a state religion.

In general, the Propaganda Movement took the prevailing arrangement in the Philippines as a given. It was assumed that once the goal of expelling the friars had been attained, the native clergy would step in their place and perform their roles in a social formation that was essentially the same as the colonial society but for the friars. The idea of simply replacing Spaniards with Filipinos but with everything else intact undergirded the nationalism of *ilustrados*.

However, a focal point of *ilustrado* nationalism was the exclusion of so-called primitive races from the imagined community for whom the Propagandists struggled to gain civil liberties (Aguilar 2005). For them, the label “Filipino” stood for the dominant Catholicized and Europeanized native elites. For being deemed unassimilable, the cultural groups represented by Muslims and other highland tribes most of whom had not converted to Catholicism—and therefore continued to enjoy religious freedom—were not deemed as part of the Filipino nation. This idea of the nation emanated from a racist impulse that excluded minority cultural groups. It was this nation that Calderón (1907, 242) had in mind when he argued that the “totality of the Filipinos, even those who boasted they were Masons and sectarians, were Catholics”; to Calderón freedom of religion would be “extremely dangerous” as the separation of church and state would cause an outrage to “the consciences of nearly all” and create “deep division” among the already divided Filipinos. In this view, the unity of church and state would be a cohesive force that would bring together the nation, conceived in the specifically *ilustrado* sense. In such a society, Catholicism would be the putative social glue.

### **Calderón’s Proposal on Church–State Unity**

Under Title 3, Calderón’s (1907, 241) draft of the constitution declared Catholicism as the state religion. The original proposal read as follows:

Artículo 5. La nación protege el culto y los ministros de la religión católica, apostólica, roma, que es la del estado, y no contribuye con sus rentas a los gastos de otro culto.

Art. 6. Podrá ejercerse privadamente cualquiera orto culto siempre que no sea contra la moral y los bienes costumbres y no atenten a la seguridad de la nación.

Art. 7. La obtención y el desempeño de todos los empleos y cargos de la republica, así como los pagos de los derechos civiles y políticos, son independientes de la religión de los filipinos.

[Article 5. The nation protects the worship and the ministers of the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion, which is the religion of the State, and does not use its revenues to contribute to the expenses of any other form of worship.]

Article 6. Any other form of worship may be practiced privately, provided that it is not contrary to morality and good custom and does not imperil the safety of the nation.

Article 7. The appointment to and performance of all work and positions in the republic, as well as the payments of civil and political dues, are independent of the religion of Filipinos.]

Article 5 is unequivocal about Catholicism's proposed status as "the religion of the State," whose ecclesiastical personnel would be "protected" by the state. However, Article 7 clarified that the state was autonomous from, and not subordinated to, the Catholic Church; on the contrary, the Catholic Church was dependent upon the state for protection and support. This provision could be interpreted, even if it was not necessarily Calderón's intention, as putting the state above the church as in the Patronato Real.

In Article 6, the proposed charter contained an incipient idea of religious freedom contingent upon the private practice of religions other than Catholicism. This echoed the spirit of the Spanish constitution of 1869 as well as the Costa Rican constitution.<sup>12)</sup> At the same time, it can be seen as an acknowledgment of the existence in the Philippines of religious practices other than Catholicism. Thus other religions would be tolerated but these would have to remain in the social margins and without state subsidy, in contrast to the open and state-supported practice of Catholicism. Other religions were supposed to neither go against morality and the established customs of the people nor undermine the state's security. This provision implied the proscription of proselytization, which could be construed as undermining the nation, conceived irreducibly as a Catholic nation. In effect, Calderón's proposed charter would tolerate other religions but these would be consigned to the twilight zone.

Nonetheless Calderón's proposal reflected the prevailing policy in the Philippines in the late nineteenth century. As Marcelo del Pilar ([1892] 1996, 432) stated:

Para la legalidad vigente en el Archipiélago, la religión católica es la religión del Estado, pero no es obligatoria á los habitantes del país. El código penal de aquella región reserva al catolicismo

12) The current constitution of Costa Rica declares in a single provision: "La Religión Católica, Apostólica, Romana, es la del Estado, el cual contribuye a su mantenimiento, sin impedir el libre ejercicio en la República de otros cultos que no se opongan a la moral universal ni a las buenas costumbres" [The Roman Catholic and Apostolic Religion is the religion of the State, which contributes to its maintenance, without preventing the free exercise in the Republic of other forms of worship that are not opposed to universal morality or good customs]. See note 3 for the relevant provision of the 1869 constitution of Spain.

la supremacía religiosa y el derecho exclusivo á la manifestación pública y propaganda pública; pero lejos de imponer sus doctrinas ni el ejercicio de su culto, sanciona y garantiza la respetabilidad de las otras creencias religiosas, á despecho de los exclusivismos del dogma católica. (art. 219 á 227)

[According to the existing laws in the Archipelago, the Catholic religion is the religion of the State, but it is not obligatory on the inhabitants of the country. The penal code of that region reserves to Catholicism religious supremacy and the exclusive right to public worship and public propagation; but far from imposing its doctrines and the exercise of its worship, the law sanctions and guarantees the respectability of other religious beliefs, in spite of the narrow-mindedness of Catholic dogma. (Art. 219 to 227)]

This policy could be an indirect admission of Spain's inability to proselytize all of the islands' inhabitants, especially those who lived in remote locations. At the same time, it mandated respect for their religious beliefs and practices, which did not sit well with the state's directive to missionize these communities in a new *reducción* program conceived in the early 1880s (Aguilar 1998, 157).<sup>13)</sup> Amid these realities Calderón's proposal may be seen as a reaffirmation of the status quo. It could also have been crafted in view of the fact that many resident foreigners, especially other Europeans and Americans, were not Catholics and many native elites had to deal with them in the economic and social realms. Thus the proposed charter would maintain the status quo except for one fundamental difference: Filipinos would staff and control the parishes as well as the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

### Filipinization: The Native Clergy as Heir to Power

In the minds of countless native priests as well as of the native elite, the Filipinization of parishes was the culmination of the secularization movement.<sup>14)</sup> In Malolos, however, proponents of church-state unity wanted to push Filipinization not only of the parishes but also of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, deemed as the logical outcome of the struggle for secularization. As Majul (1967, 159) put it, the native clergy "expected to have a share in the government for which they had sacrificed so much." In defense

13) On the original *reducción* that sought to "reduce" converted natives into compact settlements, see Phelan (1959, 44–49); Rafael (1988, 90–91).

14) In 1898 there were 967 parishes (746 regular parishes, 105 mission parishes, and 116 missions), all except for 150 or 15.5 percent under the control of the friar orders (Majul 1960, 295 n. 1). In 1845 there were about 700 secular priests, a figure that declined to about 550 in 1875; by 1890 it had risen to 825 (*ibid.*, 305). Despite the growth in numbers, the secular clergy's control of parishes remained basically unchanged. Viewed differently, assuming all secular priests gained control of parishes, there would remain about 15 percent of parishes that would not be filled.



against anticlericalism, Schumacher (1981, 81) contended that some of the clergy saw “the necessity of political participation on their part if they were to safeguard the rights and interests of the Church.” For varied reasons, members of the native clergy believed it had a birthright not only to ecclesiastical power but to political participation as well.

Moreover, Calderón (1907, 242–243) had a pragmatic concern. The establishment of an official church would be a tactical device to ensure that the Philippine state would name the heads of religious orders; if there would be separation of church and state, he contended that the Vatican would be in a perfect position to name “foreign bishops and ecclesiastical authorities and absolutely disregard the native clergy.” With an official church, conceived as a national church, Calderón argued that any indemnification for the disposition of the monastic properties would remain in the Philippines rather than be siphoned off to the Vatican. This view was based on the premise that Filipino church officials would be loyal to the Philippine state rather than to the Vatican, although exactly how the religious orders would be controlled was not specified. In any case, with a national church Calderón felt the country was in a position to negotiate a concordat with the Vatican.

Interestingly, at the last minute, an “additional article” was appended to the long list of transitory provisions in the Malolos Constitution. It stated that “All the estates, edifices, and other property possessed by the religious corporations in these islands shall be deemed restored to the Philippine State as of May 24, 1898 when the Dictatorial Government has been constituted in Cavite.” Perhaps this provision on the expropriation of friar-owned properties was added in view of the problem identified by Calderón. In any event the Revolutionary Government was in no position to enforce it. Subsequently, under US imperial rule that broke up the friar lands for sale to the tenants in exchange for a hefty compensation, Calderón felt vindicated: “The fact of the matter is that . . . a large amount of money has left the Philippine Islands and gone into the treasury of the religious corporations” (Kalaw 1957, 247).

It should be pointed out that Mabini, despite his stance on the separation of church and state and being a well-known Mason, was behind the concept of a national church (Majul 1967, 169–170). In May 1898 the Junta Patriótica in Hong Kong declared that

Queremos qué la religión de los naturales y la de los que al país vengan, sean rigurosamente respetadas por los poderes públicos y por los individuos en particular.

Queremos que el cristianismo, base de la civilización presente, y el fundamento sólido de sus instituciones religiosas, viva sin fuerza, ni imposiciones; y que el clero natural del país sea el que dirija y enseñe á aquellos naturales, en todas las jerarquías eclesiásticas.

Queremos que el sostenimiento de ese clero se sufrague como lo acuerden los distintos gobiernos regionales ó como lo determinen los municipios ó instituciones populares electivas, que en la localidad funcionen. (Calderón 1907, 33)

[We want the religion of the indigenes and of those who come to the country to be strictly respected by the public authorities and by those individuals in particular.

We want Christianity, the basis of the current civilization, and the solid foundation of their religious institutions to subsist without force or compulsion, and the country's native clergy to lead and teach the people at all levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

We want the maintenance of that clergy to be provided for, as the different regional governments shall decide, or as the municipalities or popular elective institutions functioning in the locality shall determine.]

Calderón's inclusion of this manifesto in his memoirs suggested his cognizance of Mabini's desire that Catholicism and the indigenous religions be "strictly respected" (as in Article 6, which we have seen was a nod to the reality of religious pluralism in the Philippines); that Christianity should not be imposed on or forced upon the people; but also that the native clergy—whose subsistence ought to be provided for by the people through their local government units—should be the people's pastors and occupy the full range of the ecclesiastical hierarchy (Calderón's Article 5). As the principal force behind this manifesto, Mabini had expressed his patriotic desire for a Filipino to head the Catholic Church in the Philippines, "although subject to the Pope in Rome" (Majul 1967, 170).

Mabini deemed the national church, as the legitimate fruit of the revolution, should be under the direction of the revolutionary government. From around the middle of 1898 this concept began to assume organizational form, a position that hardened as the revolution proceeded and Mabini's influence on Aguinaldo deepened. On June 20 of that year Aguinaldo declared all marriages invalid unless preceded by a civil wedding (Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 61). Calderón (1907, 108) considered this decree as "anti-Catholic" and as "doing violence to the consciences of Filipinos, nearly all of whom are Catholics"; he also deemed it objectionable to the Filipino clergy as it violated the sacrament of matrimony (*ibid.*, 109). However, Aglipay supported the introduction of civil marriage, an act that solidified his alliance with Mabini (Schumacher 1981, 70). Aguinaldo's decree was a sign that the state would dictate upon the church precisely because of the union of church and state, a scenario that rather curiously Calderón kept out of his purview.

In the nineteenth century, the Patronato Real acquired specific characteristics that provided the framework for church-state relations, which the native Filipinos would seek to emulate. A consequence of the definitive triumph of liberalism that dismantled the absolutist ancien régime church, the *exclaustración* of 1836 and 1837 dissolved the reli-

gious orders in Spain, leaving only three seminaries under the jurisdiction of the Ministerio de Ultramar exclusively to train missionaries for overseas deployment (Aguilar 1998, 23). Thus the Spanish Philippines was one of the very few places where friar orders could thrive. Coping with their emasculation, the friars sought to make themselves useful to the state, ultimately developing an excessive patriotism (*españolismo*). At the same time, Spanish authorities increasingly treated the clergy as mere “employees of the state” (Schumacher 1999, 2). As John Schumacher (2006, 296) put it, the Patronato Real became “a political instrument . . . for maintaining Spanish rule over a subject people . . . an instrumentalization [of the church] not resisted by many friars seeking the advantage of their own particular orders.” Based on this model of the Patronato Real, Aguinaldo’s government sought a far-reaching enforcement of the idea of a national church through the appointment of Gregorio Aglipay as *capellán castrense* (military chaplain) sometime in May or June 1898.

Before this appointment, Aglipay had been a parish coadjutor, particularly in San Pablo, Laguna, when the revolution broke out in August 1896 and in Victoria, Tarlac, by the end of that year (Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 36).<sup>15</sup> On September 4 Aglipay, as an official of the revolutionary government, took it upon himself to appoint a secular priest, Fr. Eustaquio Gallardo, then parish priest of Santo Domingo, Ilocos Sur, as Provisional Vicar General of the diocese of Nueva Segovia after the Spanish Dominican bishop had fled the see in Vigan in mid-August because of the arrival of revolutionary forces (*ibid.*, 42). Aglipay’s action suggested that he deemed the authority of Aguinaldo’s civil government as sufficient basis to make an ecclesiastical appointment. However, it should be noted that Aglipay’s ideal of church-state relations, although based on the Patronato Real, was not entirely in accord with the historical realities of the nineteenth century and with Aguinaldo and Mabini’s view concerning state control of the church.<sup>16</sup> Guided by his own patriotic zeal, Aglipay exercised his appointing power and made decisions he hoped would

15) Aglipay probably met Aguinaldo, Mabini, and Isabelo de los Reyes at San Juan de Letran when they were students there in the early 1880s (Schumacher 1981, 69 n. 11).

16) Aglipay’s ideal of church-state relations was elucidated upon in his third manifesto of October 28, 1898 in which he stated that: (a) the church was independent of the state and must not be subordinated to it; (b) nevertheless, the cooperation of civil power was necessary for the spiritual ministry, hence the clergy must live in harmony with the civil authority; (c) the Vatican had granted rulers who had shown “great zeal and love for the good of the Church” the right to intervene in church affairs, such as through the Patronato Real, but only the Pope possessed this prerogative, not the clergy; (d) the Filipino clergy must seek from the Filipino government whatever was needed for their work and later inform the Pope of favors received from the state in order that the Pope could reward those services; (e) all initiative in ecclesiastical matters must come from the clergy, not the civilian authorities; and (f) the clergy must follow and not violate church doctrine and canonical prescriptions (Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 57–60).

receive the Vatican's acquiescence.

Signifying the hardening of the revolutionary government's position, on October 20, 1898 Aglipay, while attending the Revolutionary Congress in Malolos, was elevated to the post of *Vicario General Castrense*, a position that made him head of all military chaplains in the revolution and later interpreted to mean head of all the Filipino clergy (Schumacher 1981, 72; Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 43). In this elevated post Aglipay sought to mobilize the Filipino clergy to support the revolutionary government, admonishing them to "harmonize [their] situation with the state of affairs created by the Revolution" (Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 56); to unite and organize themselves to take over the reins of ecclesiastical power in the parishes and dioceses and, thereby, withdraw adherence from Fr. Bernardino Nozaleda OP, Manila Archbishop and patriarch of the Philippine church; and, finally, to seek canonical confirmation from Rome for the new appointments created (*ibid.*, 50–54).

Evidently, there were significant points of convergence between the position of Calderón on church–state unity and Mabini's own advocacy about a national and Filipinized church. In fact, outside of the Malolos Congress, Aguinaldo's revolutionary government acted in ways that resonated with the Patronato Real, with Aglipay as the main conduit to implement the revolutionary state's policy.

## Debating Church–State Relations

When the Malolos Congress returned to the issue of the state and religion in late November 1899, a vigorous debate did ensue. Deploying his oratorical skills continuously for five hours, Tomás del Rosario explained his opposition to the unity of church and state (Calderón 1907, Appendix CR71). In the afternoon of the same day, Manuel Gómez spoke on behalf of the unity of church and state (*ibid.*, Appendix CR76–78). The following day Arcadio del Rosario, with "patent erudition," took his turn to defend the necessity of religious freedom. Subsequently Calderón, also a polished orator, spoke to elucidate the reasons for his position on church–state unity (*ibid.*, Appendix CR81). On November 24 Calderón continued his presentation, but a number of "interruptions" by Tomás del Rosario were recorded.

In the heat of these exchanges, according to Teodoro Agoncillo (1960, 302), "one group hurled charges and counter-charges against the other. Thus, the Calderon group was accused of being the stooges of the friars. More cutting was the indictment that the men carrying the burden of defending the State religion were traitors to the cause of the Revolution."

The lead separationist Tomás del Rosario, for instance, emphasized that “Christianity was the best of all religions, if it had not been altered by human passions. He said that with the doctrines of Christianity it would have been possible to establish the Universal Republic, but religious intolerance had made it impossible” (Calderón 1907, Appendix CR73). This statement sought to differentiate “true Christianity” in theory and in practice. In fact, Tomás del Rosario stressed that in the Philippines “the true Catholic religion has never been preached and the teachings of Jesus Christ have been prostituted” (*ibid.*, Appendix CR75). As a result, what he called “*feudalismo teocrático*” (theocratic feudalism) characterized “our present religion” (*ibid.*). In response, Manuel Gómez argued that Catholicism was “the most perfect” religion into which “the Filipino people” had been born and that even though its ministers had prostituted their calling it did not “divest the Catholic religion of its superior worth,” pointing instead to the need to distinguish human frailties from the tenets of the faith itself (*ibid.*, Appendix CR78). Aware of sensitivities among Congress delegates, Tomás del Rosario stood to clarify that he did not in the least intend to impugn Catholicism, even going to the extent of claiming that it was also his religion (*ibid.*, Appendix CR81). The separationists thus focused their criticisms not on religion itself but on the faults of its ministers—reminiscent of the conventional Propagandists’ line.

Manuel Gómez argued that Catholic priests, although subject to all vices and passions, nonetheless sought the good of humanity; besides, he argued, no nation could boast of having its members rigorously complying with all its precepts and mandates (*ibid.*, Appendix CR78).<sup>17</sup> Gómez also ruminated that, with the union of church and state, the evil in humanity would be restrained by two coercive forces: the “internal” force through religion and the “external” force through the state (*ibid.*). However, in questioning the value of Catholicism as a state religion, Arcadio del Rosario’s riposte highlighted that comparative statistics on crime in countries with and without a state religion did not support the idea that a state religion made any difference in reining in human passions (*ibid.*, Appendix CR80). Indeed the consensus among the native elite was that the friars themselves did not transcend their human passions.

Apart from their personal morality, the friars were widely decried for interference in—even “usurpation of”—the affairs of the state.<sup>18</sup> But the advocates of state religion

17) On this point Manuel Gómez was amplifying an argument advanced by the friars a few months earlier, that is, that only a few of their ranks had “failed in their duties”; that these acts were never tolerated, and the erring friars were corrected; and that all social groups had their own small group of offenders. See the last-minute defense addressed to the Ultramar by the heads of the Augustinians, Franciscans, Recollects, Dominicans, and Jesuits on April 21, 1898 (Gutierrez *et al.* 1907; 2014).

18) For a discussion of the friar orders’ desperate attempts to salvage Spain’s rule over the Philippines during the period 1896–98, such as the ouster of Gov.-Gen. Ramón Blanco, see Blanco (2004).

emphasized that, with the friars' ouster, the native clergy would take over the Philippine church and would prove to be unlike the Spanish friars. Because of their tested patriotism, Filipino priests would not usurp governmental powers (*ibid.*, Appendix CR94). As far as the separationists were concerned, however, the religious minister's nationality was not a consideration. In advancing the first of 12 reasons why a state religion was not acceptable, Arcadio del Rosario sounded a warning even about the native clergy: "The ministers of a religion protected by the State usually begin the exercise of their ministries as self-sacrificing martyrs but end as tyrants and executioners (*verdugos*)" (*ibid.*, Appendix CR79).<sup>19</sup> This blanket portrayal of church ministers demanded the ability to step back from one's patriotism as a Filipino, but for an advocate of church-state unity it was not easy to countenance this radically different perspective.

For each argument in this debate a counterargument was easily found, even when the critical gaze shifted from Catholicism to its ministers. On the basis of argumentation alone, it was an apparent stalemate. What is more, for the protagonists the question of church-state relations was profoundly emotional, as Tomás del Rosario acknowledged at the outset: "it was with aversion that he would speak, since the religious question is linked with highly venerated memories and all the legends with which we were rocked from our cradle" (*ibid.*, Appendix CR72).

Perhaps to create emotional distance, the separationists highlighted not local history but European history, which they presented as pivoting around the Papacy. They trained their intellectual armaments against papal power, even if under Spain the Vatican did not govern the Philippine church directly but through the Spanish monarchy in the form of the Patronato Real. In the exchange that saw Calderón defending the native clergy's patriotism as the source of confidence for their non-usurpation of state power, Arcadio del Rosario countered: "Not the clergy, but the Papacy" (*No es el clero, es el Pontificado*) (*ibid.*, Appendix CR95).

## Separationists and the Papacy

As the main proponent of the separation of church and state Tomás del Rosario argued on the basis of a profound historical distrust of the Papacy, which harked back to Del Pilar's 1889 statement about the need to weaken the Pope. In his defense of separation,

19) Mabini would express an analogous opinion after his capture by US forces in 1900: "the interest of the Catholic religion requires a radical change of conduct on the part of those who are to administer the Philippine parishes, be they friars or secular priests, Filipinos or Americans" (cited in Schumacher 1981, 88).

Tomás del Rosario presented his own take on European history to stress the long struggle of the state to free itself from the clutches of Rome, which had created a state within a state, a social formation in which ecclesiastical power overwhelmed the state and acted despotically.

He spoke of the errors and the constant ambitions of the Pontificate, which resulted in intolerance, persecutions and religious wars. He dwelt on the dual dangers of public power whenever religious power is joined with civil power. . . . He deplored the odious and military character assumed by Catholicism, when the Popes proclaimed themselves leaders of civil government, reducing the princes of the church to soldiers of the Pontiffs. (Calderón 1907, Appendix CR73)

He explained the Crusades as impelled by “religious fanaticism” and he discoursed on the policy that proclaimed the Papacy as “ruler of the world” (*dueño del mundo*) and the conquest of the Indies (*ibid.*, Appendix CR74).

He examined the obstacles to the formation of a juridical community among the pueblos, which was opposed by the Catholic Church, thereby establishing religious inequality, and the princes were forced to accept the temporal supremacy of the Church, thus there remained a permanent state of war. . . . He said that the Popes considered the State as a religious and ecclesiastical institution, the absorbing and irresistible apogee of the Middle Ages. (*ibid.*)

He went on to discuss the Reformation and the monarchs’ claim to their divine origin to counteract the power of the Roman pontiff. He analyzed the consequences of the Reformation, which he said “annihilated” the Roman Church and proclaimed “the liberty of the human conscience” (*ibid.*). He discussed “the policies of [Cardinal] Richelieu, who emancipated the State from ecclesiastical control, and whose diplomacy was continued by Mazarin, until religious liberty and equality of all religions had been achieved” (*ibid.*). He then reviewed the “Congress of Westphalia” and discussed “the independence of the States from ecclesiastical tutelage” (*ibid.*, Appendix CR75).

Tomás del Rosario’s recounting of European history overdrew the Vatican’s power and underemphasized the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte. But his point was to suggest that the newly independent Philippines should seize the opportunity brought about by the struggles and wars in Europe that had liberated the state from Roman control. To advocate the contrary was regressive, a return to the Medieval Ages.

Supporting the view that church-state unity was repugnant was Arcadio del Rosario’s proposition that papal power in countries without religious freedom always resulted in intervention in civil power with disastrous results. The Philippines should not think it could restrain the Vatican, for he pointed that France had not been able to diminish or weaken the power of the Pope despite many concordats. It was also Arcadio del Rosario who pointed out that in the United States, where religious freedom had reigned for “over



a hundred years,” the Catholic Church was flourishing. In contrast, he attributed the “decadence of Spain” primarily to “the denial of religious freedom and the consequent preponderance of the clergy” (*ibid.*, Appendix CR80–81).

Tomás del Rosario devoted nearly five hours of expostulations on European history, which to him was the basis for the necessity of church–state separation. Conspicuously absent was Philippine history. Although fully aware of his own country’s past, Tomás del Rosario opted not to make any reference to the secularization movement and the martyrdom of Burgos, Gómez, and Zamora. The separationists kept their distance from an issue of vast subjective importance to members of the native elite many of them were related by kinship to native priests.

When he finally mentioned the Philippine situation, Tomás del Rosario took the perspective of non-Catholics, focusing on Muslims in Mindanao and Jolo “and the distinct beliefs professed by the inhabitants of the Philippine Archipelago,” for whom, he said, privileging the Catholic Church as a state religion would be unjust and would bring about “serious conflicts” and “provoke a civil war” (*ibid.*, Appendix CR75). Similarly Arcadio del Rosario spoke of the “genuine tolerance” that prevailed in the Philippines, which should not be reversed by adopting a state religion (*ibid.*, Appendix CR80). This line of reasoning recalled Del Pilar’s criticism of the decree on Rizal’s deportation to Mindanao: “we maintain that the Philippines is composed of people with heterogeneous religions. . . . To hold the theory that Catholicism is the national tie in the Philippines is to exclude from Spain’s community the non-Catholic groups—those who are not even Christians and above all the polytheists” (Del Pilar [1892] 1996, 432).

## The Catholic Clergy and the Deferment of Separation

Members of the Filipino clergy attended the sessions of the Revolutionary Congress, eagerly participating “as spectators and lobbyists” (Schumacher 1981, 82).<sup>20</sup> According to Majul (1967, 159), “many Filipino priests interested in the outcome of the discussions were seen occupying seats reserved for guest[s].” They were disappointed by the turnout. The lone Catholic priest who was a member of the Revolutionary Congress, Gregorio Aglipay “tried to have the amendment suspended” and apparently was instrumental in persuading Mabini to do just that (*ibid.*; Schumacher 1981, 83).

Earlier, on October 22, 1898 Aglipay, whom Aguinaldo had appointed *Vicario General*

20) Over a century later, a similar scene would be replayed as members of the Filipino Catholic clergy observed and sought to influence the deliberations in the House of Representatives over the Reproductive Health Bill in 2012.

*Castrense*, had issued a circular to the Filipino clergy to indicate that the intention of the revolutionary government was to “preserve [the Catholic religion] in all its purity” (and presumed dominance), thus meriting the clergy’s recognition and cooperation (Majul 1967, 172). Their noncooperation could impel the revolutionary government to adopt the separation of church and state (Schumacher 1981, 72), which in Aglipay’s view would “gravely . . . prejudice the interests of the clergy and above all the service of religion” (cited in Gowing 1969, 206 n. 5). The turn of events in Malolos was probably beyond Aglipay’s expectation, for had it been he would have endeavored to be present and influence the vote. As it turned out, he was away on official business when the vote was taken (Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 62–63).

After the triumph of the principle of separation, a number of Filipino priests petitioned Aguinaldo to preserve the Catholic Church’s position and veto the Congress’s decision. In a memorial Fr. Mariano Garces (Calderón 1907, Appendix CR113–121) argued that religion, as the source of morality, was the basis of society and government. In the Philippines it had to be Catholicism because it was the religion of the majority of Filipinos. He stated that the separation of church and state was one of the errors of liberalism and condemned by the Popes. Moreover, religious liberty meant that people could think of God in whatever way they wanted, giving rise to error and impiety. Garces concluded that the triumph of the revolution was God’s handiwork; therefore, people had to be grateful and demonstrate this gratitude by safeguarding the Catholic Church as the state religion and prohibiting other religions.<sup>21)</sup>

The vexations caused by the approval of the provision on church–state separation were so grave that Mabini, who personally advocated this principle, was compelled to seek its suspension. As Calderón (*ibid.*, 244) put it, “The religious problem was of such tremendous implications that Mabini himself, a fierce sectarian and a Mason with serious commitments, did not dare to accept” the principle as presented and approved by the Revolutionary Congress.

While the debate in Malolos was going on, Mabini had warned Aguinaldo about the fallout that could destabilize the revolutionary government:

There is now going on in Congress a heated discussion on the religious question. If you favor one faction, then the other will separate itself from the government. . . . It is imperative that you commission a Secretary to inform Congress that, unless the times become normal, such problems should not be discussed. . . . This is just a warning of what may happen in the future. (cited in Majul 1967, 161; cf. Schumacher 1979, 278)

21) The Catholic Church hierarchy’s claim to its centrality in society through a religious explanation of the success of the Philippine revolution would reverberate nearly a century later in an analogous claim regarding the 1986 People Power revolution.

Indeed, the revolutionary government had thought it necessary to obtain the cooperation of the native clergy in rallying the support of the masses, akin to the way the Spanish colonial state relied on friars to prop up the rule of Spain in the islands. Earlier on July 26, 1898 Aguinaldo had ordered local officials “to call upon the patriotism of all Filipino clergy . . . to impress upon their parishioners . . . that in order that our independence should be secured it is necessary to give absolute adhesion to the revolutionary government and its worthy president” (cited in Majul 1967, 165).

With this apprehension, after the triumph of church–state separation, Mabini (1931, 231) as prime minister addressed a memorandum to the council of state in mid-December 1898, declaring

No es admisible en estos momentos la votada por el Congreso, por dos razones: 1.<sup>a</sup> Porque no se pueden sostener por ahora las garantías constitucionales que establece en pro de las libertades individuales, precisamente en los momentos en que se ha indicado la necesidad del predominio del elemento militar; y 2.<sup>a</sup> porque no sería conveniente establecer abiertamente la separación de la Iglesia y del Estado en estos difíciles momentos, dando motivo al retraimiento de los mantenedores de la religión del Estado.

[The voting in Congress is inadmissible at this time for two reasons: 1. Because it is not possible to sustain for now the constitutional guarantees that have been provided to establish individual liberties, precisely at this time when military dominance is necessary; and 2. Because in these difficult times it would not be appropriate to establish openly the separation of Church and State, causing the withdrawal of those who support the State religion.]

Given the exigency of the moment, Aguinaldo would not risk alienating the Filipino clergy and their supporters, yet he could also not veto the approved provision on church–state separation. To stem the tide of disaffection, Aguinaldo adopted Mabini’s proposal—conveyed to the assembly on New Year’s Day 1899—to postpone the implementation of Title 3, Article 5, “until the official recognition of our Independence”; meanwhile, the status quo would prevail, with the municipality concerned providing for the maintenance of the local priest. This evasive technique was adopted into one of the constitution’s transitory provisions.

It was astute of Aguinaldo not to court disaster by offending the clergy. Although many native priests supported the revolution, many members of the native clergy also remained loyal to Nozaleda—“compelled to satisfy the demands of conscience and fidelity to the Church if they were not to cut themselves off from the whole meaning of their calling as priests” (Schumacher 1981, 69).

For their part, Aglipay’s supporters did not convene to establish a national church until a year later in Paniqui, Tarlac (cf. *ibid.*, 109–112). The Paniqui assembly declared

itself independent of the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy, confirmed allegiance to Rome, and vowed it would not accept any foreign bishop unless approved by native priests in a plebiscite (Clifford 1969, 228). On April 29, 1899 Aglipay was sentenced by a tribunal created by Nozaleda, but this move was publicized only on May 4, when the revolutionary government was in retreat (Scott 1987, 26–28). He was excommunicated for “‘usurpation of authority’—making ecclesiastical appointments while only an army chaplain, assuming functions of a prelate by virtue of a civil appointment, and ordering Filipino clergy not to obey their Spanish superiors” (*ibid.*, 26). Nevertheless, the revolutionary government continued to support Aglipay, who remained one of its officials, Mabini even assisting Aglipay write his defense (Achútegui and Bernad 1960, 95–103).<sup>22)</sup>

Aglipay’s own position, along with the Filipinization of the Catholic Church, was undermined by the approval of the separation of church and state in the Malolos Congress. Still, the actions of Aguinaldo and Mabini, particularly in appointing Aglipay, indicated a determination to ignore the outcome of the vote in Malolos. Although for a while some lower officials might have prevaricated on this issue or were determinedly moderate (Schumacher 1981, 74–78, 80–81, 86), the actions of the top leadership of the revolutionary government fitted the model of a state religion, with the civil government exercising appointive authority in the church. At the extreme, many local government officials harassed native parish priests and “interfered with the religious practices of the inhabitants,” although Aguinaldo sought to curb abuses and safeguard the rights of the clergy (*ibid.*, 80).<sup>23)</sup> These contradictions underscored the politics, tensions, and pragmatics of attempting to build a state in the throes of war and revolution. Amid the chaos, the revolutionary government did in fact operate on the basis of church–state unity, a vindication of Calderón’s position.

## Conclusion: Conflicting Visions of National Community

In the face of how the stark options on the relations of church and state were presented and debated in the Revolutionary Congress—and even though both sides were animated by a shared antipathy toward the Spanish friars—it can now be understood why, in the

22) On the so-called Aglipayan schism, see Achútegui and Bernad (1960; 1966; 1971; 1972); Clifford (1969); Scott (1987). On the cultural nationalism of the Philippine Independent Church, see Gealogo (2010).

23) In the case of Negros Island the local revolutionary government, in staunchly favoring the separation of church and state, issued instructions in November 1898 to limit the power of the Catholic Church through measures such as “secularizing cemeteries” by putting them under the jurisdiction of the respective municipalities (Fuentes 1919, 112, 121).

absence of a middle ground, the Filipinos elites in Malolos were sharply divided.

Calderón and other proponents of church–state unity wanted to build a state on the foundation of a “Filipino Catholic nation” that merged two distinct imagined communities: the imagined egalitarian community of the nation within a definite territorial boundary, on the one hand, and that of the hierarchical Catholic ecumene that was global in scope, on the other hand. In other words, their imagined community was simultaneously nationalist and Catholic, a tricky conflation of two types of imagined communities that operated on the basis of diametrically opposed time and space coordinates.<sup>24</sup> To Calderón and other supporters of state religion, this merger was unproblematic for they perceived it as the basis of social cohesion and national unity, narrowly conceived. However, this unity made sense at the expense of non-Catholics in Philippine society.

The imagined national community of the champions of church–state separation was radically different from those who advocated church–state unity: they recognized a pluralist Philippines and their notion of community was inclusive of Muslims and adherents of indigenous religious traditions. As such, their imagined community of the nation was informed by the country’s religious heterogeneity, which justified religious freedom and religious pluralism. This notion of community meant the effective diminution of the Catholic Church, regarding it as just one among several religions despite the fact that it was the religion of the majority. Proponents of separation held a deep distrust of the Catholic Church’s officialdom, symbolized by the Papacy, the history of which they presented with their own twist. Ultimately, proponents of church–state separation were animated by the desire to undermine ecclesiastical power because of their experiences with the colonial Spanish church and their ideological insistence on a secular state free from Roman interference. At the same time, because they considered the institutional church as inherently prone to abuse, they did not consider a shift to a Filipinized church as ground for optimism. Institutional infirmities, they believed, would corrupt church ministers regardless of nationality. This stance left the proponents of church–state separation at the Revolutionary Congress in Malolos with no acceptable response to the profound desire for Filipinization of the Catholic Church. In effect, they negated the history of the Filipino nationalist movement. Their inclusivity could not accommodate Filipinization. Their imagined community of the nation took account of the present but not of the past; their desired state’s historical moorings were in Europe more than on Philippine soil.

The advocates of church–state union espoused an exclusive notion of community

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24) On the distinction between national and religious communities, see the classic work of Benedict Anderson (1991).

that sought to do justice to the history of Filipino nationalism, while the proponents of church-state separation advanced an inclusive notion of community but made no connection to the local history of struggle rooted in the secularization movement within the church. Advocates of union were strong on the clamor for Filipinization of the church, espousing a “Catholic nation,” while their opponents held to the grand idea of a secular state buttressed by European history. One was narrowly patriotic; the other, broadly universalist—twin but contradictory impulses that simultaneously tugged at the nation.

### Epilogue: The Imposition of Separation

The question of church-state relations remained essentially unresolved—a profoundly divisive issue at the historic juncture when Filipino elites confronted the task of defining their vision of national community and the type of state they wanted to erect. However, for the sake of political expediency the short-lived Malolos Republic maintained the unity of church and state. Amid the exigencies of the moment, it opted to retain Catholicism as the state religion on the model of church-state union under the Patronato Real of the nineteenth century. It would take the American imperial occupation of the Philippines to settle the issue that the Filipino elites could not resolve.

The US colonial policy on church-state separation was first enunciated on July 6, 1900 by Major Gen. Elwell Stephen Otis who, as military governor, pledged that “As under the Constitution of the United States complete freedom is guaranteed, and no minister of religion can be interfered with or molested in following his calling in a peaceful and lawful manner, and there must be a complete separation of Church and State” (Gowing 1969, 209). Animated by the First Amendment, the principles of religious freedom and church-state separation were confirmed in the Organic Act (or Cooper Act) passed by the US Congress in 1902 (also known as the Philippine Bill of 1902), which provided the framework of government in the Philippines until its replacement by the Jones Law of 1916. Section 5 of this legislation declared: “That no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed.”<sup>25)</sup>

Despite this avowed US policy, at the outset there was a period of confusion on the part of some Filipinos, who represented the separationist position in Malolos, because

25) American Catholics “generally favored” the application of these principles to the Philippines, “though they vigorously warned the Protestants of the futility of sending missionaries to a land as devoutly Catholic as the Philippines” (Gowing 1969, 210).

of how the US seemingly favored the friars. The 1898 Treaty of Paris bound the US to protect friars and other Spanish subjects, respect property rights of the Catholic Church, and indemnify the church for war-inflicted damages to ecclesiastical property (*ibid.*, 207–208). This working out of the US policy of separation, which extended protection to the church, its ministers, and properties, was based on the “friendly” separation that then prevailed in the United States, which was beyond the ken of the separationists in Malolos whose stance indicated “hostile” separation. Based on their limited grasp of how an independent Philippines would relate to Rome, Filipino elites on both sides of the debate were also not attuned to the political maneuvering that the United States had to play with the Vatican.

Soon, however, Filipino elites began to grasp the US policy on church–state separation and the colonial government’s adherence to it. The Catholic Church was clearly disestablished as it no longer received state funds nor controlled public education; priests *qua* priests no longer held positions in the government; the state had no authority to make appointments in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and Protestants were free to proselytize and establish their own churches. Most significantly, because the US considered discontent in the friar estates a major cause of the Philippine revolution, it insisted on the redistribution of these properties to which the Vatican agreed albeit subject to “consultation” with the religious orders. A long period of haggling ensued, with the Dominicans, Recollects, and Augustinians resorting to machinations and “intrigues” (as in the nineteenth century) “in an effort to realize greater profits for themselves,” as Antolin Uy (2001, 172) put it. Eventually the agreement was signed in December 1903, resulting in the partition of these monastic estates to the benefit mainly of wealthy Filipinos (Endriga 1970; Escalante 2002; cf. Connolly 1992). Despite limitations, the American policy effectively dismantled the friar lands and the friar orders lost their powerbase in the Philippine countryside.

Spain’s loss of the Philippine islands logically suggested the cessation of the Patronato Real, which the Vatican acknowledged in December 1902 through Leo XIII’s promulgation of the *Quae Mari Sinico* (Gowing 1969, 218; Uy 2001, 171). This Bull suppressed the ancient privileges of the religious orders. However, the Vatican refused to order the withdrawal of the friars from the Philippines, although it acquiesced to an informal agreement with the US for their voluntary expatriation (Gowing 1969, 215). At the start of the revolution against Spain in 1896, there were 1,124 friars in the country. During the fighting most of them escaped to Manila, but about 300 were taken prisoner and about 50 were killed (*ibid.*, 204).<sup>26</sup> By December 1903 only 246 friars remained; they

26) Many friars were publicly beaten. In some places as in Cavite, “thirteen were savagely put to death, ↗



were either too old or infirm to return to parish work or just plain realistic to confine themselves to educational institutions in Manila, Cebu, and Vigan (*ibid.*, 217). With schools as their new powerbase given their reduced personnel, the friar orders were permitted by the United States to remain in the Philippines without being perceived as a threat to the social order. However, the leadership of the friar orders remained in Spanish hands, who decided to relocate their headquarters to Spain.<sup>27)</sup> The Vatican subsequently moved to replenish the depleted stock of Spanish clergy with American and other European clergy. Religious congregations with no prior engagement in the Philippines started to set up shop for the first time in the country.<sup>28)</sup>

US intervention and agreement with the Vatican also ensured that, under US rule, the Filipinization of the Catholic Church would not happen in any substantial way. In effect, the Catholic Church in the Philippines remained a largely colonial institution. Most parishes were indeed passed on to Filipino priests for lack of alternative personnel, and this might have pleased the proponents of Filipinization. But the church's upper echelon was a different story. By 1906 four of the five episcopal sees in the Philippines were held by American bishops, with Fr. Jorge Barlin being named the only Filipino bishop, who was assigned to Nueva Caceres (*ibid.*, 218; Uy 2001, 180). The appointment of American bishops "was resented by Filipinos, who wished to see Filipino clergy raised to the episcopate in their own country" (Gowing 1969, 218). To appease this resentment,

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↘ one by being burned alive, another by being hacked to pieces, and still another by being roasted on a bamboo pole" (Gowing 1969, 204). In Schumacher's (1976, 401–405; 1981, 49–51) opinion, Aguinaldo was not anticlerical and he allowed the friar parish priest of Kawit to flee and treated the captured friars with courtesy; in contrast, Bonifacio, with Mariano Alvarez's consent, ordered the execution of friars and other Spanish prisoners, an act that Aguinaldo publicly condemned.

27) The headquarters of Augustinian operations in the Philippines was moved to Madrid in 1901, returned to Manila in 1927, but moved back to Spain in 1935. For most of the twentieth century Spaniards comprised the handful of Augustinians in the Philippines. "Native vocations" did not begin until the 1950s. In 1980 natural-born Filipinos accounted for 29 of the 59 Augustinians, although 11 Spaniards had undergone naturalization as Filipino citizens (Augnet 2010). The administration of the Philippine province of the Franciscans was transferred to Madrid in 1905, leaving behind a Provincial Commissariat to oversee the remaining activities. By 1948 23 Spanish Franciscans remained in the Philippines (Gutay c. 2007). The Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary remained in Spanish control with its seat in Avila, a Filipino Dominican Province being established only in 1971 (Dominican Province of the Philippines 2014). Interestingly only the Society of Jesus and the SVD have produced historians (principally Fr. John Schumacher SJ and Fr. Antolin Uy SVD) who have studied the nineteenth century critically.

28) The Irish Redemptorists and the British Mill Hill Missionaries both arrived in 1906; the Dutch and Belgian priests of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM, Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae) in 1907; the Dutch Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC, Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis) in 1908; the German Society of the Divine Word (SVD, Societas Verbi Divini) in 1909; and the American, plus a handful of English-speaking European, Brothers of the Christian Schools (FSC, Fratres Scholarum Christianarum) in 1911.

three years later two more Filipinos attained episcopal rank: Pablo Singzon for Calbayog and Juan Gorordo for Cebu (Uy 2001, 180)—token gestures to pacify the clamor for Filipinization.

In analyzing this episode, Peter Gowing (1969, 218) suggestively commented that these appointments “proved to be a wise move. The American bishops were able to give leadership in a time when the Roman Catholic Church was adjusting to the new condition of separation of church and state in the islands and could no longer look to the civil authorities to support its policies, enforce its regulations, and provide all the other benefits of ‘patronage.’” By implication, the Filipino clergy by and large remained trapped in the tradition of church–state unity under Spain and could have been troublesome to the American colonial authorities.<sup>29)</sup>

As far as the new imperial ruler was concerned, the prime see of Manila was definitely outside of Filipino hands. Because the Catholic Church remained a powerful institution, although far from what it was like during the Spanish period, the United States would not risk having it under a Filipino. Leadership of the Philippine church was crucial, even if the Vatican through *Quae Mari Sinico* had proscribed the clergy in the Philippines from engaging in political activity (*ibid.*, 215; Clifford 1969, 245). If any consolation, Nozaleda was the last of the friar-archbishops; all subsequent archbishops of Manila belonged to the secular clergy. The Archbishop of Manila from 1903 to 1916 was Jeremiah J. Harty, an American whose previous assignment was in Missouri. Succeeding him was Michael J. O’Doherty, an Irish, who served as bishop of Zamboanga starting in 1911 when the diocese was created and, prior to coming to the Philippines, had been rector of the Irish College in Salamanca, Spain, for seven years. At ease with both Hispanic and Anglo-American cultures, O’Doherty held the archbishopric of Manila lengthily from 1916 until his death in 1949, outlasting formal US rule of the Philippines.<sup>30)</sup> Despite their ethnicities, these archbishops presided over a church that remained predominantly Spanish, unable to come to terms with US colonial rule as well as connect meaningfully with Filipinos who spoke the local languages and, increasingly, English.

Indeed, as the American period wore on, most of the Filipino clergy continued to be steeped in Hispanic language and outlook, forever longing for the Spanish past and perpetuating this nostalgia in Spanish-language seminaries (Schumacher 2009). The

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29) Certainly there were exceptions; most notable were Frs. Mariano Sevilla and Manuel Roxas who in the early 1900s championed Filipinization while accepting church–state separation (Schumacher 1981, 245–247).

30) O’Doherty was succeeded by Gabriel M. Reyes, the first Filipino Archbishop of Manila who was elevated to the post in October 1949. But Reyes died soon after becoming archbishop, and the archbishopric was handed to Rufino J. Santos, Archbishop of Manila from 1953 to 1973.

church was colonial in an out-of-sync way. Like the Filipino clergy who lobbied against the outcome in Malolos, this “Hispanicized clergy in an Americanized country” repudiated the separation of church and state, an attitude that prevailed until the 1950s, as Schumacher (*ibid.*, 257) perceptively observed. In fact, from the mid-1940s onwards, in defending their interests in education against perceived nationalist threats, Catholic bishops began to make pronouncements that since then have fostered the imaginary of a “Catholic nation,” based on a conflation of the body Catholic and the body politic (Francisco 2014), with all the contradictions already evident at the end of the nineteenth century. Thus was made into a holy grail the vision of national community that in Malolos Calderón championed, Mabini devised, and Aglipay executed.

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